Letter from Taizé

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Peace to Those Who Are Near

"Christ came to proclaim the joyful message of peace: peace to those who are far away and peace to those who are near" (Eph 2:14-18). It is this quote from St. Paul that provides a title for the latest issue of the *Letter from Taizé*. On the first and last pages, young people from different continents share experiences of solidarity lived out concretely in their immediate environment. On the inside pages, one article addresses the issue of "thinking globally, acting locally" and two biblical commentaries are offered on passages related to relationships within the family, the natural place for solidarity close at hand.

In our attempt to create new forms of solidarity and open up ways of trust, there are, and there always will be, trials. At times they may seem to be overwhelming. So what then should we do? Is not our response to personal trials, and to those which other people endure, to love still more? (Brother Alois, *Letter 2012 – Towards a New Solidarity*)

Calin (Romania)

We often forget how important solidarity is in our life and it seems we ignore the benefits that it brings to us. Solidarity does not necessarily mean that you need to travel across the world to help some poor people from a Third World country; it starts with a simple "Hello". Solidarity is part of our life from the first moments. If we want to create a world in which solidarity is normal we should start small, with our family, with neighbors, with that stranger in the bus or that moment when you can help an elderly person just by keeping the door open for them when they leave a building. I think solidarity is very easy to achieve; it does not require anything but love, and everyone has that from God. I also consider that the road to true happiness starts with solidarity.

Hannah (Britain)

Being friendly can often fall in the trap of being cliché and saying all the normal phrases. A commitment to be authentic can be a way of sharing peace with those we came near to. We cannot be best friends with everyone. If we try we will probably lose a depth to our friendship. At the same time, it is important that we stay awake and notice the outsiders or the new people that have stepped into an unfamiliar place (university, church, etc.) and we take responsibility to recognize them and ensure they are welcomed.

Judith (Netherlands)

For me, solidarity begins by meeting people in a genuine way. Recognizing the humanity in others and in oneself. We must allow the needs of others to affect us. When I returned home after a stay in Taizé, I realized how easy it was to close off any opportunity to meet others, to deal with their needs. For example, I always turn on my MP3 player when I leave home. Looking around me on the bus or train, I saw how many people were just listening to their own music. So I decided to take off my headphones and be more present to the people around me. That has allowed me to have some good conversations with strangers and, in a certain way, to express my solidarity.

Katarzyna (Poland)

Every day I thank God for having been born into a wonderful family. If I am the person that I am, this is primarily due to the values I received from my parents and grandparents: faith, openness and disinterested generosity. I am grateful to my grandparents who are always willing to help and listen, who helped me to discover God and the beauty of the world. Along with my parents, they showed me by their own lives how to see with the heart, with sensitivity and empathy for others.

Family ties have taught me to live in community since my childhood. It is in community that humanity fulfils itself. The dialogue between generations, based on understanding and openness, is a mutual gift whose purpose is to reveal the goodness that lies within each of us.

Alphonce (Tanzania)

I work in a university hospital in Dar-es-Salaam. There I have learned to deal with the physical needs of the rural population. The hospital receives thousands of patients from many remote areas. Most of

Continued on last page

LISTENING TO THE WORD

A Difficult Freedom

When Jesus' parents found him in the temple courts, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he was saying to them. (...) His mother treasured all these things in her heart. (Read Luc 2:41-51)

It must be every parent's worst nightmare. You set out for the day with friends. Have a marvellous time together. You set off home and suddenly realise that your only child is not with the other families as you had thought. Panic sets in. You retrace your steps. Then you catch sight of him and relief floods in.

God gives freedom to every human being, including his own son. This freedom brings risks for the person and for those around them as well. Imagine how Mary and Joseph felt as they went back to Nazareth after the Passover festival in Jerusalem and discovered that Jesus was not with them.

The parents "seek" and then after three days "find" Jesus, the son for whom they had given everything. That a child knows more than the teachers of the Torah is just about possible. What surprises us more is the way in which Jesus reacts to his parents.

In some ways, we enter into the heart of the revelation of Jesus as Mary and Joseph find him again. He cannot be domesticated or limited by any human ties. There is something greater in God's plan that escapes all attempts on our side to control it. Mary treasures these things in her heart, even if they are difficult to grasp.

Later, when his family are looking for him, the adult Jesus will say "My mother and brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it." (Luke 8:21). His family is far larger than any kindred. Whilst setting clearly the limits, the words of Jesus seek to help his family enter into God's purpose.

Similarly, with the disciples in the boat who express their anguish as the storm breaks, Jesus will say "Where is your faith?" (8:25) to invite them into the reality of trust. To the question of Martha, he will reply "There is need of only one thing" (10:42), calming her indignation and leading her elsewhere. And on the road to Emmaus, the Risen Jesus will open the eyes of two disciples who had lost all their bearings after his death on the cross. (24:13-35). Peace and joy return for them as they recognise his presence and sense their hearts on fire within.

At times when Jesus seems to be absent, or when we understand nothing of his way of acting in our life, let us dare to express that to him, like Mary, Martha and the disciples did. We can be surprised how he corrects our vision and helps us understand how God's plan is not as far away as we might have thought. And peace filters back into our life.

- How do I deal with those times when Christ seems to be lost?
- Which moments of my faith-journey do I treasure in my heart in order to rediscover peace?

BIBLE WORDS

"Honor your father and your mother"

Set at the heart of the "Ten Words," the recap
lation of God's Law given to Israel on Mount Si
these words occupy an important place in the To
(Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16). They mark
transition between the first part of the Decalog
which deals with our relationship with God,
the second part, devoted to our duties towards
neighbors. What light do they shed on human r
tionships in a society organized according to Go
intentions?

A classical—and age-old—interpretation
Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20) applies this st
ment to children; by it they are commanded to o
their parents. We should remember, however, t
the Torah is not addressed primarily to children
to adults able and willing to take upon themse
"the yoke of the Law." Thus the injunction to ho
one's parents refers in fact in the first place to
behavior towards the elderly. This is clear from a p
sage where Jesus criticizes the Pharisees who all
their followers to contribute to the Temple the
sources which otherwise they would use to supp
their aged parents (see Mark 7:9-13). Jesus conden
this use of religion to avoid a basic human solidar

But these words go further than a mere requ
ment to give material assistance. The verb "to hon
in Hebrew means "to give weight to, to consider
portant." We are thus asked to remember that
existence comes from God through other hum
beings. To honor those who have given me wha
need to live means to recognize my debt to th
who went before me, without whom I would not
the person I am. Here we are at the opposite extre
from the individualistic outlook so characteristic
the contemporary world, the myth of the "self-ma
man."

This way of looking at things encounters s
ous obstacles in present-day society. In addition
the widespread individualism and the ever m
reduced role played by the family, the increasin
rapid pace of change makes the very notion of rec
ing the wisdom to live well from our elders alm
incomprehensible. After all, little children too
know how to work remote controls and use comp

JANUARY

DAILY READINGS

1 Ga 4:1-7
Tue God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father!"

2 1 Jn 4:12-21
Wed Let us love, since God loved us first. Anyone who does not love the brother or sister they see, cannot love God whom they do not see.

3 Is 9:1-6 (1-7)
Thu To us a child is born, to us a son is given. And this is the name he has been given: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

4 2 P 3:8-18
Fri Relying on God's promise, we are looking towards a new heaven and a new earth where justice will dwell.

5 Is 53:1-12
Sat The Lord says: After the ordeal he has endured, my servant will see the light and be content.

6 Is 60:1-6
SUN EPIPHANY
Arise, shine out, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen on you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

7 Is 45:20-25
Mon There is no other God but me, says the Lord. Turn to me and you will be saved, all you ends of the earth.

8 Ne 9:9-19
Tue Because of your great compassion, Lord, you did not abandon your people in the desert. The pillar of cloud did not cease to lead them by day, nor did the pillar of fire cease to light their way by night.

9 Ps 130
Wed My soul is waiting for the Lord, I rely on his promise; my soul relies on the Lord more than a night-watchman on the coming of dawn.

10 Rm 8:5-11
Thu Paul writes: The Spirit seeks life and peace.

11 2 Tm 2:8-13
Fri St. Paul writes: If we have died with Christ, then we shall also live with him.

12 Dn 3:51-90 (A:65-67)
Sat O you who are faithful and humble in heart, bless the Lord! Sing God's praises for ever! His love is everlasting.

13 Lk 3:15-22
SUN The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

14 Ex 20:1-21
Mon On Mount Sinai, God said: I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of slavery. You shall have no gods except me.

15 Ps 8
Tue Lord our God, how great is your name in all the earth. May your glory be sung by the mouths of children and babes in arms.

16 1 S 2:1-4
Wed Hannah prayed in these words: My heart rejoices in the Lord and in his deliverance. There is no Holy One like the Lord, no Rock like our God.

17 Mk 1:29-39
Thu In the evening, after sunset, people brought to Jesus the sick and the possessed. He healed them and drove out many evil spirits.

18 Ps 142
Fri Set me free from prison, Lord, that I may praise your name.

19 2 Co 13:11-13
Sat Paul writes: Live in joyfulness. Encourage one another. Be of one mind and live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

20 Is 62:1-5
SUN From the prophet Isaiah: For the sake of my people, I shall not keep silent. I shall not rest until her justice shines out like the breaking of day. And then all will see your justice, and you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow.

21 Jn 1:29-34
Mon John the Baptist saw Jesus coming towards him and said: There is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

22 Mt 9:35—10:8
Tue At the sight of the crowds Jesus was moved to compassion, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

23 Rm 6:20-23
Wed Paul writes: Now you have been set free from sin and are in the service of God, you will gain the holiness that leads to eternal life.

24 Ps 40
Thu I waited for the Lord and he heard my cry. He put a fresh song in my mouth: a hymn of praise to our God.

25 Jn 13:31-35
Fri Jesus said: It is by your love for one another that everyone will recognize you as my disciples.

26 Jn 4:1-42
Sat Jesus said: My food is to do the will of the One who sent me and to complete his work.

27 Lk 4:14-21
SUN Jesus read out these words of Isaiah the prophet: The Spirit of the Lord is on me. God has sent me to announce good news to the afflicted, sight to the blind, and freedom to the oppressed.

28 Is 29:15-21
Mon When the Lord comes, the deaf will hear the words of the book and, delivered from shadows and darkness, the eyes of the blind will see. The poor and resourceless will find fresh joy in God.

29 Jn 2:1-12
Tue The first of Jesus' signs was at Cana in Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

30 Mt 4:1-11
Wed Jesus said to the tempter: Away with you! For Scripture says, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone".

31 Jn 10:11-18
Thu Jesus said: There are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and I must lead these too. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock and one shepherd.

These short readings are those read, day by day, at community prayer in Taizé. The Bible reference given indicates a slightly longer passage.

God of goodness, even when we are far from you, you never cease to love us and you are waiting for us. By your presence and your forgiveness, you become our peace.

FEBRUARY

DAILY READINGS

1 Ps 16
Fri Lord, you teach me the way of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy.

2 Lk 2:22-40
Sat PRESENTATION OF THE LORD Having presented the child Jesus in the Temple, his parents returned with him to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. And as the child grew to maturity, he was filled with wisdom; and God's favour was with him.

3 1 Co 13:1-13
SUN Love is patient and kind. Love does not seek its own advantage, it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but finds its joy in the truth.

4 Jm 3:13-18
Mon Peacemakers sow the seeds which will bear fruit in justice.

5 Rm 6:8-14
Tue St. Paul writes: Count yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

6 Is 43:9-12
Wed It is you who are my witnesses, declares the Lord, you are the servant whom I have chosen.

7 Ps 25
Thu Guide me in your truth and teach me, Lord, for you are the God who saves me.

8 Mt 18:21-35
Fri Jesus told a parable in which a king says to his servant: I cancelled all your debt because you begged me to. Shouldn't you then have had mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had on you?

9 Lk 9:1-6
Sat Jesus sent his disciples out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere.

10 Lk 5:1-11
SUN Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Put out into deep water and let down your nets for a catch." "Master," Simon replied, "we have worked hard all night long without catching anything, but because you say so I will let down the nets."

11 Zc 8:7-8
Mon The Lord God says: Look, I shall rescue my people, gathering them from east and west. They will be my people and I shall be their God, faithful and just.

12 Jn 1:1-5
Tue In the beginning was the Word. In him was life, and that life was the light of all people.

13 Mt 6:1-6
Wed ASH WEDNESDAY Jesus said: When you give, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your generosity be secret. And your Father, who sees all that is done in secret, will reward you.

14 Ws 7:7-10
Thu I have loved God's wisdom more than health or beauty — even preferring her to the light, for her radiance will never cease.

15 Phm 1-25
Fri Paul writes: May our fellowship in faith lead you to full knowledge of all the good we can accomplish for Christ.

16 Is 11:1-10
Sat Isaiah said: God's Spirit will be upon the Messiah. He will not judge by appearances, but he will judge the weak with justice and give fair sentence for the humble in the land.

17 Lk 4:1-13
SUN Jesus answered the tempter saying, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'"

18 Is 2:1-5
Mon The peoples of the earth will say: Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, for him to teach us his ways and for us to walk in his paths.

19 Is 49:8-15
Tue The Lord says: My people will not go hungry or thirsty, they will not be scorched by the heat of the desert, for the one who has compassion on them will be with them, guiding them to springs of water.

20 Lk 6:20-23
Wed Looking at his disciples, Jesus said: Happy are you who are poor, the kingdom of God is yours.

21 Mk 1:21-28
Thu After hearing Jesus, people were amazed and said to each other, "Here is a new teaching, and with authority behind it: he even gives orders to unclean spirits and they obey him!"

22 Is 54:1-10
Fri God says: Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, my faithful love for you will not be shaken.

23 Jr 15:15-21
Sat The Lord says: If you come back, I will take you back, and you shall stand before me. I am with you to save you and free you.

24 Lk 9:28-36
SUN Jesus took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his face changed. Then a cloud enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud saying: This is my Son, the Chosen One; listen to him.

25 Ps 145
Mon All look to you in hope, O God. And with generous hand, you satisfy every living creature.

26 Mt 3:1-12
Tue John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

27 1 P 1:3-9
Wed Though you are troubled by all kinds of trials, you are full of joy. For your faith, which is worth more than gold — that perishes even though it is refined by fire — will result in praise when Christ Jesus is revealed.

28 Ws 7:21-30
Thu God's wisdom renews the universe. From one generation to another she passes into souls to make them friends of God.

Jesus our hope, in us you kindle a spark of light. It allows us to come close to your compassion. And even in our sufferings you bring to birth a spirit of inner strength and of mercy.

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Holy Spirit, in humble prayer, enable us to be in communion with the innocent, with believers whose hearts are simple. Without knowing it, they reflect for many Christ's love and compassion.

MARCH

DAILY READINGS

1 Heb 13:1-3
Fri Be mindful of prisoners as if you yourselves were in prison with them, and of those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were also suffering.

2 Mk 1:1-8
Sat Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

3 Ex 3:1-15
SUN Moses said to God, "If I tell the people: 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you', and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I am who I am; thus you shall say to them, '«I am» has sent me to you.'"

4 Is 12:1-6
Mon I will trust and not be afraid, for God is my strength and my song.

5 Rm 13:11-14
Tue Paul writes: Let us put aside the deeds of darkness. Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ.

6 Hos 10:12
Wed From the book of the prophet Hosea: Sow saving justice for yourselves and reap a harvest of faithful love. It is time to seek out the Lord until he comes to shower righteousness upon you.

7 Heb 11:8-16
Thu Our predecessors in faith recognized that they were exiles and nomads on this earth. In this way, they showed clearly that they were in search of their real homeland. And God has prepared a city for them.

8 1 Th 3:6-13
Fri Paul writes: Your faith has been a great encouragement to us in the middle of our own distress and hardship.

9 Mt 6:1-6,16-18
Sat Jesus said: When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that no one will know you are fasting except your Father who is there in secret.

10 2 Co 5:18-21
SUN Paul writes: In Christ, God has reconciled us to himself and entrusted us with the ministry of reconciliation.

11 Ps 4
Mon Answer me when I call to you, O my righteous God. You have set me free from my distress.

12 Is 51:11-16
Tue Those whom the Lord has freed will return with singing, radiant with an everlasting joy.

13 Heb 10:32-39
Wed From the Letter to the Hebrews: Remember the first days when, after having received the light of faith, you stood your ground in the face of great suffering. All your belongings were seized, and you accepted this joyfully because you knew that you had better and lasting possessions.

14 Ps 71
Thu Ever hopeful, O Lord, I will praise you more and more, my lips shall proclaim your justice.

15 Ezk 34:1-16
Fri The Lord says: I will take care of my flock. I shall look for the lost sheep, bring back the strays, bandage the injured and strengthen the sick. I shall watch over the healthy and strong.

16 Mk 5:1-20
Sat Jesus said to the man he had healed: Go home to your people and tell them everything the Lord has done for you in his mercy.

17 Ph 3:7-14
SUN Paul writes: Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

18 Ps 119:17-24
Mon Though I am a stranger upon the earth, do not hide your will from me. My soul is consumed with longing for it.

19 Rm 4:13-22
Tue St JOSEPH
Paul wrote: When everything seemed hopeless, Abraham believed and so he was made the father of a multitude of peoples.

20 Ps 37:27-40
Wed The salvation of the just comes from God. He is their refuge in times of trouble.

21 Ep 4:7-16
Thu If we live in love and in truth, then in all things we shall grow into Christ, who is the head. So the whole body grows and builds itself up in love.

22 Mi 6:1-8
Fri The Lord says: What have I done to you my people? How have I made you tired of me? Answer me! I redeemed you from the house of slavery. Remember and recognise my saving justice.

23 Jn 12:47-50
Sat Jesus said: I did not come to judge the world, but to save it.

24 Lk 19:28-40
SUN PALM SUNDAY
As Jesus came into Jerusalem, the crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God for all the miracles they had seen. They cried out: Blessed is the one who comes as king in the name of the Lord!

25 Rv 2:8-11
Mon The Lord says: I know your trials and your poverty, yet you are rich: do not fear suffering, stay faithful until death and I will give you the crown of life.

26 Rm 8:31-39
Tue St. Paul writes: I am certain that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

27 2 Tm 1:6-11
Wed Paul writes to Timothy: Share in my sufferings for the Gospel, relying on the power of God who has saved us and called us to be holy.

28 Lk 23:33-34
Thu On the cross, Jesus said: Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing.

29 Ep 2:13-18
Fri GOOD FRIDAY
Christ is our peace. He has broken down the dividing wall of hostility between the peoples and reconciled them to God in one body through the cross.

30 1 P 3:18-22
Sat Christ was put to death in the body and raised to life in the Spirit. And in the Spirit he also went to announce the Gospel to those who once had refused to believe.

31 Jn 20:1-9
SUN EASTER DAY
When Jesus' disciple entered the empty tomb, he saw and believed.

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APRIL

DAILY READINGS

1 Ac 26:1-23
Mon The Risen Christ said to Paul: I am sending you out so that people may turn from darkness to light and receive forgiveness of their sins through faith in me.

2 Zp 3:14-18a
Tue Your God is with you. God will quiet you with his love and dance with joy for you.

3 Mk 12:1-12
Wed Jesus said of himself: The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone: this is the Lord's doing.

4 Ps 40:7-12
Thu Here I am, I have come and, as it is written, I desire to do your will, my God. Your law is deep within my heart.

5 Jn 15:9-17
Fri Jesus said: There is no greater love than to give one's life for those one loves.

6 Mt 24:4-14
Sat Jesus said to his disciples: You will be handed over, but anyone who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed to the whole world.

7 Jn 20:19-31
SUN A week after the resurrection the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. "Peace be with you," he said. Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not be unbelieving any more but believe."

8 Ac 5:17-33
Mon God has raised Jesus from the dead to make him Saviour, and through him to change our hearts and grant forgiveness of sins.

9 Is 44:21-28
Tue Sing for joy, O heavens, for the Lord has acted! Mountains, burst into song, for the Lord has redeemed his people!

10 Zc 13:1-2
Wed The Lord says: When that day comes, a fountain will be opened for my people and it will wash away sin and impurity.

11 Heb 7:23-28
Thu Jesus' power to save those who come to God through him is absolute, because he lives for ever to intercede for them.

12 1 Co 15:12-22
Fri Just as death came through one man, so through one man has come the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

13 1 Co 1:4-9
Sat God is faithful and has called you to live in communion with his Son, Jesus Christ.

14 Jn 21:15-19
SUN A third time, Jesus said to Peter, "Do you love me?" Peter was hurt that he asked him a third time, "Do you love me?" and said, "Lord, you know everything; you know I love you."

15 1 Jn 4:1-4
Mon John writes: You are from God, for the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

16 2 Co 4:7-15
Tue We know that God, who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead, will also raise us up with Jesus and bring us to himself.

17 Heb 13:1-8
Wed Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever.

18 1 Jn 4:12-21
Thu No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

19 Col 3:1-4
Fri From now on, your life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ — who is your life — is revealed, you also will appear with him in glory.

20 Jn 14:11-19
Sat Jesus said to his disciples: I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

21 Jn 10:22-30
SUN Jesus said: My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand.

22 Lk 5:27-32
Mon Jesus noticed a tax collector called Levi sitting at the tax office and he said to him, "Follow me." And, leaving everything, Levi got up and followed him.

23 1 P 1:3-9
Tue In his great mercy, God has given us new birth into a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

24 Lk 6:17-23
Wed Jesus said: Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

25 1 P 5:5-7
Thu St MARK
Clothe yourselves in humility in your relationships with others, for God gives his grace to the humble.

26 1 Co 4:1-5
Fri Paul writes: Judge nothing prematurely, but wait until the Lord comes.

27 Is 54:5-10
Sat With deep compassion I shall bring you back to me, says the Lord, your redeemer.

28 Jn 13:31-35
SUN Jesus said to his disciples: I give you a new commandment: love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.

29 Is 40:25-28
Mon Isaiah says: Why do you complain, my people, saying, "My way is hidden from the Lord, my cause is disregarded by God"? Do you not know? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the world, who does not tire or grow weary.

30 Mk 10:42-45
Tue Jesus said to his disciples: You know that in the world rulers lord it over their subjects and make their power felt. This is not to happen among you. No, anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant.

Jesus, our joy, you turn our darkness into a Gospel light, and to each of us you address this call: "Come, follow me; I am gentle and humble of heart; in me you will find rest."

These short readings are those read, day by day, at community prayer in Taizé. The Bible reference given indicates a slightly longer passage.

much better than their grandparents. It is thus surprising that, in a society constantly in quest the latest fad, the elderly are relegated to a life on fringe, with nothing to look forward to but their n death.

Things are different in the community described the Ten Words. There, each generation is aware it it benefits from a *tradition*, a legacy received m its predecessors which it must adapt and pass to those who come afterwards. This means that dimension of *solidarity across time* is seen as es- tial. It also means that every human being knows t they occupy both places in the words we are mining; they are in turn sons/daughters and fa- rs/mothers. That is why the text concludes with words "...so that *you* (and not *they*) may have a g life on the earth." This implies that those who me after us will treat us in the same way that we ated those who went before us.

Young people are thus called to realize that they nor their elders not by remaining immature but becoming in their turn responsible adults, able give to their own children the best they have re- ved. Similarly adults will not try to hold on to ir children by a possessive love or by imposing ir own wishes on them, but will attempt to create ee and caring atmosphere in which the young can ly develop their gifts.

The New Testament accords less importance to relationship between parents and children. That ecause Christ's call involves an absolute, "the one ng that matters" that makes everything else sec- dary (see Luke 10:38-42). So Jesus can even say, anyone comes to me and does not hate their fa- r or mother... they cannot be my disciple" (Luke 26). The word "hate" here is a Semitism used to press a priority, which Matthew has understood ll by translating the phrase as "Whoever loves ir father or their mother more than me is not rthy of me" (Matthew 10:37). This priority given fellowship with Christ does not at all invalidate commandment to honor one's parents. When us speaks to a young man searching for eternal , he tells him first to keep the Ten Words, and ncludes with the one concerning parents. Taken t of its normal order, the commandment thus ac- ires an unexpected importance. Only later comes invitation to leave father and mother in order to low the Teacher. By doing this, the man does not se to honor his parents; rather, he gives this es- m its correct place. Our human parents are thus egrated into the new family of God, where there ne Father and we are all brothers and sisters.

REFLECTING ON THE WORD

What can I do about world problems?

When John the Baptist announced the coming of God's Reign, the people asked him, "What must we do?" (See Luke 3:10-14.) Jean did not ask people to prepare for this event, the most important in human history, by doing something earth-shattering. No, he invited them to change their way of life, to re-examine their relationships with others. He proposed a change that was both quite feasible and yet that would radically transform their lives, that would turn them towards God and give them new hope.

We can never reflect enough on this mystery: God communicated his deepest being by means of a human life—and not the most spectacular human life. Not through the life of a great statesman, someone very powerful or influential. God chose to reveal himself through the life of a child born to a family of little importance, who lived in a remote corner of the great Roman Empire, a life that even seemed to end in failure, by dying on a cross. During the short time that Jesus spent on earth, he could bring hope, peace and healing to only a few people. But God knew that what is most visible to our eyes is not necessarily what is most important, that the grain which falls into the earth and seems lost will produce much fruit. If God chooses to act in such a humble and discreet fashion, how can we view our own actions as insignificant?

This cannot mean that it is enough for us only to be concerned with a small group of those around us, to limit our solidarity to our family and friends. The solidarity that we are called to live must be at one and the same time local and universal. Local, because it involves concrete actions towards our neighbor; universal, because in Christ we are united to others beyond all borders. In one of his parables (Luke 10), Jesus tells us that the man who was seriously injured and dying by the roadside was helped by a stranger, and not by one of his own people.

On the one hand, therefore, we must not let ourselves be discouraged, knowing that the smallest of our actions can have great consequences, often without our realizing it. At the same time, we must widen our solidarity because of the universality of our faith, so that, like John the Baptist, we can prepare the coming of God's Reign by means of this friendship for everyone. The present manifestation of God's Kingdom may seem small and ordinary, like a mustard seed, and yet it is also able to become more important and more real than all the destructive forces of history. Thus the problems of the world will certainly not disappear, but we can find new energy to build, with the little we have, a future of peace and a more just world.

them are poor and remain in the hospital for months while waiting for treatment. Some are even abandoned by their families.

It is thus not enough to meet these people only from a professional point of view, in a doctor-patient relationship. There is a pressing need to meet them as friends, as children of God. We are called to share their difficulties in order to offer sympathy and empathy and to serve them better.

Michio (Japan)

In my Caritas base-camp in Japan, many young people come to help the victims of the earthquake and tsunami of 2011. With them, we have several activities: cleaning up the city, working with fishermen and trying to create a community in temporary housing. After work, we share what we have discovered through these experiences. When we share, we realize that there are no barriers between generations.

I have often heard adults impressed by the large number of young people who do not think about money but just want to help those who have lost their family or home. Many Japanese are worried about the future because of the nuclear-power plants and the political situation, but through this experience we feel hope and trust.

Nicholas (USA)

Recently, I participated in a university delegation to El Salvador. Twenty years after their civil war, the village we visited still suffers. They cannot forget the violence and loss they experienced. There was a seven-year-old boy there named Hector, who would take us by the hand and follow us. One day I saw him digging holes in the dirt. "What are you doing, Hector?" I asked him. He looked up at me and smiled brightly. "I'm building a house for the ants!"

This moved me very deeply. I am twenty-six years old, and as I grow older, I can see that I am expected to become stronger, more independent...perhaps even more cynical. Hector reminded me of the value of a child's tenderness, especially towards the littlest ones who are like ants in the eyes of the world. The innocence and idealism of youth can be so extreme sometimes that it looks ridiculous. But perhaps, if we pay attention, it can actually be a pathway to radical love and peace.

Cathel (France)

A few years after first working as a volunteer in Mexico, I went back in 2011 to start a day-care center for elderly people who are extremely poor, the Casa de Dia "San Agustin". Mexico is plagued by social inequality: the richest drive around in their sedans, while others have no water. It is enough to visit a city to see how precarious things are.

Our house works mainly with old people exhausted by insecurity, needing more than food in order to survive. That is the main challenge of an association like ours—to provide an adequate framework, conducive to sharing and to the struggle against loneliness. The world will not change without us. Without wanting to change it in a revolutionary manner, we can always put all our energies to work in order to improve it.

The Letter from Taizé will cease publication

The *Letter from Taizé* has accompanied the story of the community and the young adult meetings since its first issue at Easter 1970. It has borne witness to over forty years of questioning and commitment. Now the content of the Taizé website has become comprehensive, with further improvements planned. News, texts, photos and music are all available there. As a result, the *Letter from Taizé* quarterly will soon be discontinued as a printed publication: number 279 (the second issue of 2013) will be the final issue. Brother Alois' annual letter (each December) and the *Short Writings from Taizé* will continue as printed publications.

This issue and the two following ones will contain all the short daily bible readings for the entire year 2013. They are also available on the Taizé website and, beginning in 2014, they will be able to be downloaded in a different, printer-friendly format.

Other similar texts written by young people can be found at www.taize.fr/letter.

Letter from Taizé

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